GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5151
ANSWERED ON:24.04.2015
USE OF HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS IN FOOD ITEMS AND FRUITS
Gutha Shri Sukender Reddy

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken note of some biscuits manufacturing companies reportedly using animal bones in the manufacturing of biscuits in order to make them crunchier, if so, the details thereof along with the action taken/being taken by the Government against such companies;

(b) whether Oxytocin, which is used to boost milk production in the dairy industry is still being manufactured despite ban on its sale in the country;

(c) if so, the details thereof indicating the number of cases reported, raids conducted, prosecution filed and persons arrested in this connection during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;

(d) whether cases of use of hazardous chemicals like Calcium Carbide for early ripening of fruits and vegetables have come to the notice of the Government during the said period, if so, the details thereof, State/ UT-wise; and

(e) whether any study/survey has been conducted to identify the harmful effects of these chemicals on human health, if so, the details and the outcome thereof and the other corre- ctive steps being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI JAGAT PRAKASH NADDA)

(a): As per information made available to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) by State/UT Governments and regional offices of FSSAI, no such incident has been reported in the country.

(b): There is no ban on the sale of oxytocin in the country. However, in view of t reports of misuse of oxytocin by dairy owners in milch animals, the manufacture and sale of oxytocin injection has been regulated under section 26 A of the Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940 published vide notification number G.S.R. 29 (E) dated 17.01.2014. Accordingly, the drug 'oxytocin' can only be manufactured for sale or for distribution or sold in the manner specified below(i) the manufactures of bulk oxytocin drug can supply the active pharmaceutical drug only to the manufacturers licensed under the Drugs and Cosmetic Rules, 1945 for manufacture of formulati ons of the said drug.

ii) the formulations meant for veterinary use are to be sold to the veterinary hospital only.

Further, as manufacture for sale and sale of drugs are primarily regulated by State lncensing Authority appointed by State Government, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization

(CDSCO) has written to the State Drugs regulators, that there is a need to take stringent measures on all cases of misuse of oxytocin in their states/ UTs and a constant vigil need to be kept on illegal movement of the oxytocin. Further, the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries have also issued an Advisory` to all the State Governments to comply with the provisions of the above mentioned notification.

(c): The details of prosecution filed and persons arrested in the last three years and the current year are at Annexure-I and details of raids conducted by CDSCO are at Annexure- ll.

(d): Reports suggesting use of chemicals such as calcium carbide, ethylene and ethion for early ripening of fruits have appeared in the media as also some complaints have been recei- ved in this regard.

(e): No study/survey has been conducted by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India in this regard. However, as per available information, Calcium Carbide ripened fruits on consumption, have harmful effects on human health which may include diarrhoea with or with- out blood, burning sensation of chest and abdomen, thirst, weakness, difficulties in swallo- wing, irritation or burning in eyes and skin, permanent eye damage, ulcers on the skin, sore throat, cough and shortness of breath. Enforcement of the provisions of Food Safety and Standards Act and Rules & Regulations rests with State/UT Governments. The Commissioners Food Safety/ Food (Health) Authority of States/UTs have been requested from time to time to keep a strict vigil on use of carbide gas and other hazardous chemicals for ripening of fruits. The State Governments have also been requested to educate the public through print and electronic media against consumption of such artificially ripened fruits and vegetables.